



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lava Beds National
Monument

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Lava Beds National Monument News Release

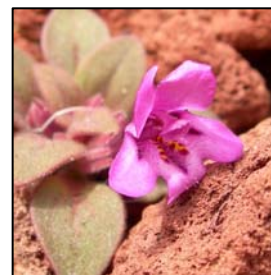
May 16, 2007

For Immediate Release

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Late Spring Flowers Blooming at the Lava Beds

Despite a dry May, several beautiful wildflowers are now in bloom at the Monument. Among them are the showy arrowhead balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*), brilliant sulfur-flower buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*) and the diminutive dwarf purple monkeyflower (*Mimulus nanus*).



Dwarf purple monkeyflower

Arrowhead balsamroot, largest of our wildflowers, grows among sagebrush on north-facing slopes in the Monument and is easily found off the trail to the top of Petroglyph Point. A deep-rooted perennial in the sunflower family, its large yellow blooms are easily seen from a distance. More widespread and common is the sulfur-flower buckwheat, another native perennial. It is found in many parts of the Monument, even growing along the paths around the Visitor Center. Sulfur-flower puts on quite an impressive display, covering the low-growing plant with neon yellow clumps of flowers about a foot off the ground. They are a favorite source of nectar for passing butterflies. One of the most interesting flowers in the Monument is the dwarf purple monkey flower. This little annual can be found growing in the hottest, rockiest pumice gravel where no other plants will grow. Only about an inch or two in height, it usually has one or two blooms that look far too large for such a tiny plant. Although common in many areas, the best place to find them is along the trail up to Black Crater, just as you begin walking on the lava flow.

Images available online for reproduction:

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/labe/press/photos/flowers2/>

Lava Beds intends to distribute regular press releases throughout the spring and early summer as various species of wildflowers bloom, with links to images posted online and information on the best locations to view them. More information is available from park staff.

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